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TOUCH AMERICA CUSTOMERS CALL PSC
WITH QUESTIONS ABOUT LOSS OF SERVICE

In response to a steady stream of calls to the state Public Service Commission over the last two weeks from Touch America long distance customers who have been notified they will soon be losing their Touch America service, the PSC offers the following information:

- According to information supplied by Touch America to the PSC, the company will soon discontinue long distance service to about 27,000 Montana accounts, most of which are residential low-volume accounts. The scheduled date for service termination is January 27 but, as a practical matter, actual termination of service will take time and may not occur exactly on that date for every customer.
- Touch America sent notification letters to the group of 16,236 Montana customers who bill less than \$5 per month and do not subscribe to other Touch America services to inform them that disconnection will occur on January 27. Customers who have not selected a new carrier by the disconnection date will not be able to make a long distance call with Touch America.
- The remainder of the Montana accounts that will lose Touch America long distance service was acquired by Buyers United, Inc., which purchased 10,465 Montana Touch America accounts. This company, doing business as United Carrier Networks (UCN), has notified all affected customers that it will take over as their long distance carrier when Touch America discontinues service to them. Customers who receive this letter will automatically be switched to UCN in February with no break in service and at the same rates as their previous Touch America service. Customers who prefer not to become UCN customers may select another long distance carrier.
- Touch America long distance customers who have any questions about whether they will continue to be served by Touch America or not should call Touch America at 1-800-823-4664.
- For consumers in search of a new long distance carrier, the PSC offers these suggestions:

- Check out internet websites that provide information about long distance carriers, including rate comparisons. Examples include: ABTolls at <http://abtolls.com/> and CallSense at <http://www.callsense.com/>.
- Ask friends and neighbors about their experiences with long distance carriers and rates.
- Consumers, especially low-volume users, should be aware that they may choose not to subscribe to a long distance carrier at all. Alternative methods for making long distance calls include using 10-10 dial around numbers, prepaid calling cards, or wireless phones.

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